

**Tribhuvan University**

**Double Consciousness in Olaudah Equiano's *The Interesting Narrative of the life of Olaudah Equino, or Gustavu Vassa, the African***

**A Thesis Submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University,**

**in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of**

**Master of Arts in English**

**By**

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This thesis entitled "**Double Consciousness in Olaudha Equiano's *The Interesting Narrative of the life of Olaudha Equino, or Gustavu Vassa, the African***" submitted to the Central Department of English by Dukendra Prasad Paudel has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research committee.

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### **I. Oludha, Double Consciousness, and Hybridity**

Double consciousness provides one with the benefit of exploiting a space from where one can examine both parts of which he/she belongs to. Double consciousness mostly is a product of hybrid situation of a person that on the one side questions the indigenous identity of him/her but at the same time enables the subject to taste both cultures at once. Afro-Americans can be exemplified best in this situation that has both consciousness of black culture as well as that of the white culture resulting into a Briton. Equiano's narrative presents Aludha as a Briton who undergoes both English and African culture when he is dressed in the cloth of a Briton. He in economic, religious, cultural and educational level, experiences these two versions of consciousness that makes him able to criticize the culture he detests and acclaim the culture he favors. He also exploits this situation in order to make his own version of judgment over British culture. He simultaneously criticizes the colonialism and evil of slavery due to his situation of double consciousness.

The research is aimed to explore the fertile cultural space from where the African slave can suggest the colonizers to behave in a humanely way so that their colonizing tendency may get a corrected legality more by providing a better life to those black people while it is in its project/ mission of capitalistic colonization. Double consciousness is an awareness of one's self as well as an awareness of how others perceive that person. However the challenge or danger of double consciousness always resides in either conforming or changing one's identity to that of how others perceive the person. Double consciousness is a concept developed by the American sociologist and intellectual W. E. B. Du Bois to describe the felt contradiction between social values and daily struggle faced by blacks in the United States. It was originated from an article of 1897 on *Atlantic Monthly* of Du Bois's titled "Strivings of the Negro People." Being black, Du Bois argued, meant being deprived of a

“true self-consciousness”. Since an additional consciousness comes to share the previously existing consciousness, it becomes a threat to the original self-consciousness.

Blacks living in European countries as slaves are the victims of such threats to their original consciousness or identity. They often perceive themselves through the generalized contempt of white. Being black as well as European raises contradictions between English social ideals, which blacks shared. Identifying this concern in *The Souls of Black Folk* Du Bois refers 'double consciousness as:

a world which yields him no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world. It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his two-ness,—an American, a Negro; two warring souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder. (24)

This "two-ness" of being African and as well as Americans leads to psycho-social tensions in which individuals or groups are forced into identifying themselves into two social worlds and viewing themselves as insider and outsider refers to their split consciousness and disadvantageous social position. Having such consciousness can harm the psyche of these black people as this dual existence is damaging to their sense of morality. "Double consciousnesses," according to Du Bois, means a “sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others.” Du Bois views the history of the American Negro is the history of this strife,—this longing to attain self-conscious manhood, to merge his double self into a better and truer self.

The concept of Du Boisian "double consciousness" has three manifestations. First, the power of white stereotypes on black life and thought (being forced into a context of misrepresentation of one's own people while also having the knowledge of reflexive truth). Second, the racism that excluded black Americans from the mainstream of society, being American or not American. Finally, and most significantly, the internal conflict between being African and American simultaneously. Du Bois saw double consciousness as a useful theoretical model for understanding the psycho-social divisions existing in the American society. He has asserted that these conflicts often occurred at both individual and group levels. Du Bois saw the prevalence of racism and figured out that sometimes peoples were themselves responsible of their mistreatment by others. He called that having a double consciousness. "It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one-self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity"(23). This double consciousness lets the person see themselves through the revelation of the other world. Their behavior is influenced by what the other people think and is distorted through others' negative image of their race. This leads to low self-esteem because of the racism. Du Bois saw the color line as a scale that divides the people and because of this distinction, people are prejudiced and stereotyped.

Olaudah Equiano (Gustavus Vassa) was kidnapped from his African village at the age of eleven, shipped through the arduous "Middle Passage" of the Atlantic Ocean, seasoned in the West Indies and sold to a Virginia planter. He was later bought by a British naval Officer, Captain Pascal, as a present for his cousins in London. After ten years of enslavement throughout the North American continent, where he assisted his merchant slave master and worked as a seaman, Equiano bought his freedom. At the age of forty four he wrote and published his autobiography, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, Or Gustavus Vassa, and The African. Written by Himself*, which he registered at Stationer's Hall,

London, in 1789. More than two centuries later, this work is recognized not only as one of the first works written in English by a former slave, but perhaps more important as the paradigm of the slave narrative, a new literary genre. Equiano recalls his childhood in Essaka (an Igbo village formerly in east Nigeria), where he was adorned in the tradition of the greatest warriors.

Equiano is unique in his recollection of traditional African life before the advent of the European slave trade. Equally significant is Equiano's life on the high seas, which included not only travels throughout the Americas, Turkey and the Mediterranean; but also participation in major naval battles during the French and Indian War (Seven Years' War), as well as in the search for a northwest passage led by the Phipps expedition of 1772-1773. Equiano also records his central role, along with Granville Sharpe, in the British Abolitionist Movement. As a major voice in this movement, Equiano petitioned the Queen of England in 1788. He was appointed to the expedition to settle London's poor Blacks in Sierra Leone, a British colony on the west coast of Africa. Sadly, he did not complete the journey back to his native land. Despite these attractive accomplishments, however, Equiano's most important work is his autobiography, which became a best seller, rivaled in popularity by Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*. He published nine different editions before his death in 1797; including an American edition (1791), and German and Dutch editions, 1790 and 1791 respectively. By 1837, nine more editions had been published. Three editions were bound together with the poems of another former slave child Phyllis Wheatly, whose *Poems on Various Subjects* (1773) was the first collection of poems published by an African American. Together, their works form the genesis of a Black written literary tradition.

Olaudah Equiano, the Igbo slave boy sold to Europe and America and fought his way from slavery to a major voice in the British Abolitionist Movement and he was instrumental on settlement of African slaves in Sierra Leone and died before he could finish the project.

With his writings and books he became the greatest African writer between 1789 to 1889. He was also the first African to have written a book in English language and a best seller at that, and he published nine different editions before his death in 1797 and buried in Cambridge shire England. If slavery was not in existence he would have gone back to Igboland, because he was proud of his Igboness despite all odds and so should emerging and current Igbo leaders.

Equiano is not an ordinary man in the sense that his extraordinary life experience makes him an extraordinary man. Most men of this time do not have the same conflict over identity that Equiano has. Equiano was socialized as an African and then resocialized as a European. However, he experienced the slave trade as an ordinary man and writes from the perspective of an ordinary European. We therefore see in Equiano's narrative a fundamental aspect of all slave narratives. Equiano's narrative is a persuasive document and therefore must be written with a double consciousness. He writes about his transformation from an ordinary African to an ordinary European. The reader therefore learns a great deal directly about the African experience in the slave trade and indirectly about the European view of the slave trade. Equiano appeals to Christianity as well as the economic incentives for abolishing the slave trade. By doing this, Equiano acknowledges the value of African life while at the same time marginalizing them as an economic asset.

Equiano Olaudah's autobiography, *The Interesting Narrative Life of Equiano Olaudah* is an extraordinary story which includes vivid descriptions of the author's life both as a slave and a free black man. Throughout Equiano's life he has encountered many hardships and sorrows. He has come in contact with many people of different races and religions. Equiano Olaudah was a well-rounded intelligent black male in which many people came to love and admire. Equiano was granted his freedom on July 11, 1766. I was astonished at the fact that there was little if any change in the way he was treated upon

becoming a free man. Equiano had many opinions and arguments about slavery, racism, interracial marriages, and religion. Two particular arguments brought forth by Equiano against slavery were the moral (sinful) argument and the economic (industrial) argument. I believe Equiano's Narrative was intended to educate all men and women on the cruel reality of slavery; however the narrative did indeed set out to target the British Parliament.

Susan M. Marren reads the *Interesting Narrative of Olaudah* in “Between Slavery and Freedom: The Transgressive Self in Olaudah Equiano's Autobiography” from lenses of slavery and finds a controversy in the perspective that abolitionists should be those who are literate and only they can make a significant step in the campaign of abolishing slavery. She writes:

In 1789, Olaudah Equiano, a freed slave publish his *Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vasa, the African. Written by Himself*. Like other black authors in Eighteenth century England, Equiano wrote in response to two imperatives: On the one hand, an internal compassion to establish himself as a speaking subject and, on the other, an external compulsion to serve the anti-slavery movement. Here was paradox, for while white abolitionists encouraged writing by literate ex-slaves because it disproved the notion that blacks were inferior, irrational beings suited by nature of slavery, the Enlightenment Philosophical tradition that spawned abolitionism interpreted blackness as absence- an absence of reason and therefore of agency. (64)

Akiyo's interpretation of the narrative of Olaudah presents it somehow more and differently than the popular reading of it as a political pamphlet. He finds it more a consciousness in black people about the evil of racism, and slavery along with politics. He in “Olaudah

Equiano and the New York Artisans: *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa*”, writes:

Equiano’s autobiography is the prototype of the slave narrative, a genre that became immensely popular in nineteenth century America. . . Even though it is easy to read Equiano’s narrative as a political pamphlet because of his great influence as an anti- slave—trade activist, we must not forget his influence was not limited to the political arena. (82)

The author of the slave narrative confronted the difficult task of reporting his lived experiences during slavery to an audience which did not recognize him as a member of its society and, in fact, viewed him as an alien whose assertion of common humanity and civil rights conflicted with some of its basic beliefs,” including the institutionalization of theories of the racial superiority of whites and the inferiority of African slaves. This difficulty was further compounded in certain cases by the former slave who addressed the questions of abolishing slavery, an institution to which members of his audience were often inextricably bound, because, economically speaking their prosperity was ensured by the slave trade.

Wilfred D. Samuels in “Disguised voice in *the Interesting Narrative of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African*” adds:

Consequently, although the narrator often sought, on the one hand, to garner support and sympathy for the abolition of slavery, he recognized, on the other hand, that the very act of writing his narrative or the simplest error on his part could not only be viewed as insolence, but could alienate the very audience that he needed if he were to accomplish his goal. The already difficult task of not alienating the audience became especially complex for Olaudah Equiano, an Ibo who after being kidnapped at age eleven, and experiencing ten years of slavery, published his two volume narrative *The Interesting Narrative of the*

Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the Africa, Written by Himself  
in 1789. (64)

Autobiography does not separate rhetorical purpose from self-assessment. Thus coming to terms with Olaudah Equiano's self- portrayal is crucial to achieving insight into his *Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano*. In spite of this, two hundred years of response to this text has failed to result in consensus regarding the cultural identity of its author: Equiano has been characterized variously as Fraud, a plagiarist, an apologist, a hero, a capitalist, and a guerrilla fighter. Viewing his interesting Narrative as an artifact of his cultural contact with the West, Jennifer Hall in "The Path Not Taken: Cultural Identity in the Interesting Life of Olaudah Equiano" writes:

[. . .] examine the relationship between this remarkable individual and his circumstances in light of current understanding of acculturation under New World slavery. In opposition to recent commentary on Equiano's narrative, we see his autobiography as containing substantial material indicating that his world view remained Igbo throughout his life span. From this perspective, discounting Equiano's African cultural legacy when appraising his accomplishments underestimates both the narrative and its author. (24)

Equiano's narrative should be viewed from the perspective that throws light in the process of understanding of acculturation of a slave under new world slavery that refers to the slavery system in America. Besides this conventional reading, Hall argues, we should equally be alert about the substantial material that indicate Equiano's way to Igbo and his African cultural legacy.

Apart from these trends of interpreting the text from the perspective of slavery, identity, autobiography etc. this research explores the advantageous and fertile place created by the situation of hybridity especially through the means of double consciousness he

possesses in course of his kidnapping, enslaving and redemption. Equiano gets an opportunity of experiencing both life of slavery and the life of a free man, as an African and as a Briton, as a colonized and as an agent of colonizer etc. These two ways of life make him acquire the double consciousness in him and he cleverly exploits this situation most of the time in his life. As a Briton, he takes different roles like a seaman, warrior, preacher, agent of colonizer, slave seer etc. these different roles too help him to gain double consciousness. Another main source of double consciousness in him is his hybrid situation that makes him an African- Briton.

The research is divided into three chapters. The first chapter deals with a general introduction of the thesis comprising of a brief detail of Aludah, his narrative and double consciousness in tandem to hybridity. The second chapter is the application part of the dissertation which includes textual evidences carrying different situations to provide double consciousness in Equiano. The third and the last chapter is the conclusion. Conclusion is followed by works cited.

## II. Double Consciousness in *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African*

The term 'double consciousness' is used to describe an individual whose identity is divided into several facets. W.E.B. DuBois, the coiner of the term 'double consciousness' defines it in his book *The Soul of Black Folk* as a "sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity and of two-ness"(2). Double consciousness, so, is an awareness of one's self as an awareness of how others perceive that person. Olaudah, in this sense, examines himself, and the world from both their perspectives of an African and the English. He accumulates the English consciousness and looks at him in addition to the African consciousness that he already has, and then tries to form his own identity which inevitably turns out to be hybrid. As an African he is a man of ignorance and piety and from the English eyesight he merely turns to an object to be commoditized. He is an instrument to carry out the colonial, religious and the capitalistic mission of English people. Moreover, he is a black, savage, uncivilized and a barbaric object for white people that can be of their use either by hook or crook. So, Equiano, looking through both black and white eyes becomes an agglomeration of double identity.

Equiano, an African by birth, is a complex character with different roles in his life that makes him a carrier of double consciousness: as his awareness of his African-ness and that of a Briton. Similarly, he bears both the African and black which is by birth and European that he acquires later, cultures, witnesses and assimilates them to some extent. These two distinct cultures manufacture a hybrid man, Olaudah Equiano, who stands in a third space created by these two and dwindle between them. He can now tilt to any side to know about them whenever he wants. This in-between condition helps him to be a man with double consciousness. Beside it he is a man to walk across the world of slavery and freed

accumulating different perspectives of both states. Homi K. Bhabha in *The Location of Culture* defines it as an alternative survival mechanism of the subjugated people in the face of a crushing system of oppressive forces. Bhabha further writes:

Private and public, past and present, the psyche and the social develop an interstitial intimacy. It is an intimacy that questions binary divisions through which such spheres of social experience are often spatially opposed. These spheres of life are linked through an “in between” temporality that takes the measure of dwelling at home, while producing an image of the world of history. This is the moment of aesthetic distance that provides the narrative with a double edge which represents a hybridity, a difference “within” a subject that inhabits the rim of an “in-between reality. (13)

On the basis of Bhabha’s argument Equiano as a hybrid man of in between condition, acquires double consciousness that helps him to invent a mechanism to survive in any situation. On the one hand, he as the African assumes the role of his master’s object, incapable of establishing his own identity outside his status as a void, on the other hand, Equiano as British subject is the agent of himself, able to make his own conscious identity known and not voided. The vast space between the voided no-being of the African and that of the “ultimate being” the British citizen, remains deceptively large. Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin in *The Post colonial Studies Reader* explore this issue and write:

Hybridity occurs in post colonial societies as a result of conscious moments of cultural suppression, as when the colonial power invades to consolidate political and economic control or when settler invaders dispossess indigenous peoples and force them to ‘assimilate’ to new social patterns. It may also occur in later periods when patterns of immigration from the metropolitan societies and from other imperial areas of influence (e.g. indentured labourers

from Indai and china) continue to produce complex cultural palimpsests with the post colonized worlds. (137)

When one gets conscious of his/her cultural situation or suppression by other dominant cultures especially by colonizers, it creates a situation of hybridity in the identity of that person through a double consciousness he/ she gathers of both cultures.

While reading the narrative from this perspective, we find Olaudah examining himself through both African and European consciousness in course of his journey from Africa to Britain. Drescher in *Capitalism and Antislavery; British Mobilization in Comparative Perspective* opines the rationalization of slavery is deeply related to the fact Olaudah has understood that “the belief that only African could work effectively and continuously in tropical heat was widely promulgated in British popular literature” (19). Before he was kidnapped, Olaudah as an African free child perceives Africa as a land of simplicity, superior gentility and a pious land where there is no language to abuse, cheat or scold others. Equiano’s concept towards the Europeans emerges in the form of reverse ethnography right from the original moment of his enslavement. It reverses Eurocentric, racially charged notions of the civilized and the uncivilized. Equiano in his text writes feelingly of the simplicity and superior gentility of the African way of life “We were totally unacquainted with swearing and all those terms of abuse and reproach which find the way so readily and copiously into the language of more civilized people” (19). Serenity is their characteristic that devoid them of cheating, scolding and abusing the others in search of imposing domination/ rule over them.

Drawing upon the horror of being ‘torn away from all the tender conations that were dear to my heart’ Equiano’s loving re-creation of the first scenes of his African childhood participates in a widespread shift in English sensibility which was lending new meanings to these formative tears. The defining moment for celebrating threat earlier African self occurs

when he is restored to his original free African state. It is symptomatic of his fluid, dual identity, however, that he has prepared for his new state of freedom by laying out eight pound for a blue suit of superfine clothes to dance in and that his freedom should lead straight to a longing to return to Old England where he says:

To my no small grief, was obliged to leave my school master, whom I liked very much always attuned while I stayed in London, to repair on broad with my master. Nor did I leave kind patronesses, the Miss Guerin's, without uneasiness and regret. They often used to teach to read, and took great pains to instruct me in the principles of religion and the knowledge of God. Therefore parted from those amiable ladies with reluctance, after receiving from the many friendly cautions how to conduct myself, and some valuable present.

Old England where my heart had always been. (136)

Irony lies in the black's perception of white when Olaudah narrates the more civilized people are the solely owner of the barbaric language used to abusing. For him, Europe introduces them with bad practices. White people for him come up in a form of a cannibal in course of his kidnapping and transportation to the Europe. On the ship, he believes the threat of captain and the white people that they would eat him while they will undergo a food shortage. He narrates his fear of being eaten at any time in the lines:

In our extremities the captain and people told me in jest they would kill and eat me; but I thought them in earnest, and was depressed beyond measure, expecting every moment to be my last. While I was in this situation one evening they caught, with a good deal of trouble, a large shark, and got it on board. This gladdened my poor heart exceedingly, as I thought it would serve the people to eat instead of their eating me' but very soon, to my astonishment, they cut off a small part of the tail, and tossed the rest over the side. This

renewed my consternation and I did not know what to think of these white people, though I very much feared they would kill and eat me. (97)

This cannibal figure of the white people remains almost in all his life not as they appear at the beginning but dressed in a more cruel and savage clothe of slavery. The evil of slavery makes him feel the white people like a cannibal. Being horrified by the savagery and barbarism (that is always attributed to the black people but actually is practiced by white) of the white people to the black slaves, he asks the captors “if we were not to be eaten by those white men with horrible look, red faces, and long hair?” (19) It concludes his naïve African consciousness to look at those White English people.

Olaudah fails to fall under neat categories due to his situation of double-ness where he neither remains solely a native African nor can present himself in the form of an Englishman. As someone with the faculty and resources eventually to buy his freedom, Equiano distinguishes himself as the ideal of one who, through determination and hard work, as well as chance, overcomes the confines of slavery to propel himself to some of the upper echelons of British society. Furthermore, he is exceptional among his contemporary British Brethren: not only is he able to stand both on the inside and outside of the window of British society, Equiano can move efficiently between the two. The issues are which role Equiano assumes when he needs to and how he comes to know and understand his liminal position as well as his ability to work within it. Olaudah’s naïve and simple African consciousness prevails in him all along his journey of slavery as well as a freed black in the white world but in a latent form. His fascination towards the Christianity, the reading practice of white, their wisdom etc shadow his African consciousness and fascinates him towards the English culture. His admixing himself with the white culture is a gradual process in which first he contrast the distinct white culture with the African. He writes:

I was astonished at the wisdom of the white people in all things I saw; but was amazed at their not sacrificing, or making any offerings, and eating with unwashed hands, and touching the dead. I likewise couldn't help remarking the particular slenderness of their woman, which I did not first like; and I thought they were not so modest and shame faced as the African women.

(106)

His African consciousness manifests time and again even after he sounds like European, let us say Briton. He over joys the hope of meeting his sister again while he was in Gibtaltak on the way to Mediterranean. He keeps on recounting for the happy days with his family members along with his good days even after his enslavement when he was with his sister together. He happens to lose her on the way when she is sold somewhere else and he is being taken to other ship by another slave trader. His growing grief is left in his mind in the form of his longing for his original black identity through his willingness to see his sister. The time he is narrated about a girl sounding his sister, his sleeping consciousness for his true identity as a black emerges. Then, he narrates:

One day, when I was on shore, and mentioning these circumstances to some persons; one of them told me he knew where my sister was and if I would accompany him; he would bring me to her. Improbable as this story was I believed it immediately; and agreed to go with him, while my heart leaped for joy.... (137-138)

His sister here stands for the African culture and his love to her is his longing for his own African culture. His tie to his people can be witnessed in his departing period with his black friends in West Indies "All my poor countrymen, the slaves, when they heard of my leaving them, were very sorry, as I had always treated them with care and affection, and did everything I could comfort the poor creatures, and render their condition easy" (193-194).

Olaudah not only lives the life of black slave, but also by his closeness to his masters and white people learns, assimilates and mimics many English culture that gives him the English white consciousness. He is a character with different roles in Europe: a slave, seaman, ship's captain, the slave overseer and the committed and outspoken abolitionist and the independent author. While performing these different roles he sounds like English but he in fact cannot be an English man but simply remains a Briton (because of hybridist he can never fully return to his native or the English in which he will never be allowed to fully partake.) he acts like an English in the prime stage of his life that he spends in Europe. He himself plays the role of the white and looks at him as an Englishman. Now he is a representative of the English people and his eyes are that of the whites.

Talking about the English consciousness of Equiano Terry S. Bozeman writes, "Although born an African Equiano is 'British by acculturation and choice' (Carretta xvii)" (63). He in course of the development of evolving his own consciousness identifies himself more as an Englishman and his identity as an Englishman as Susan M. Merren points out "he apparently loses the ability to defamiliarize the value system of the English culture" (99). This is his part of British consciousness that is formed with the addition of different colonial consciousness, religious consciousness and industrial or economic consciousness that he gains in his living in Europe.

Olaudah's intimacy with the English people aroused a colonial consciousness in him. He goes out in expedition, with them fights with the French warriors, chases them and after conquering celebrates it. He uses the pronoun 'we' so by including himself along with the English colonizers:

At last the French line was entirely broken, and we obtained the victory, which was immediately proclaimed with loud huzz as and acclamation. We took three prizes, La Modeste, of sixty four guns, and Le Temeraire and Centaur,

of seventy four guns each. The rest of the French ships took to flight with all the sail they could crowd. Our ship being very much damaged, and quite disabled from pursuing the enemy, the admiral immediately quitted her, and went in the broken and only boat we had left on board the Newark, with which, and some other ships, he went after the French. (147)

His colonial consciousness is faintly presented in his journey to West Indies along with Dr. Irving aiming to cultivate the land over there. As a colonizer they began to clear the forest by manipulating the native people. Beside that very similar to the white colonizer's strategy of using Bible as a tool to frighten, manipulate and persuade the native people, Equiano too makes a tool of God to calm down the aggressive defense of the native people:

Recollecting a passage I had read in the life of Columbus, when he was amongst the Indians in Mexico or Peru, where, on some occasion he frightened them, by telling them of certain events in the heaven, I had recourse to the same expedient; and it succeeded beyond my most Sanguine expectations...I pointed up to the heavens I menaced him and the rest I told them god lived there, and that he was angry with them, and they must not quarrel, so, that they were brothers, and if they did not leave off, and go away quietly, I would take the book( pointing to the Bible), read and tell the god to make them dead. That was something like magic. (186-187)

Along with this, Equiano sounds like a colonial when he accepts to go in a mission of converting the African people into Christianity. Moreover he also suggests for the industrial colonization in Africa. These different ways or forms of colonization are well set in his mind, which is the outcome of his colonial consciousness. Jerry S. Bozeman blames him as a "capitalist opportunist" (610) when he suggests for the capitalistic colonization in Africa. Equiano explores the economic field for the benefit of British in Africa, "cotton and indigo

grow spontaneously in most parts of Africa a consideration this of no small consequences to the manufacturing town of Great Britain” (253-254).

Beside colonial consciousness, Equiano acquires the religious consciousness in Britain; he gets acquainted with Christianity, Bible, and the Christian God, gets baptized and becomes the devotee of the god. He fills his heart with the reverence of God; faith on god becomes a good weapon for him to fight in difficulties. However, in his great disgust, he encounters much Christian violence all over the Europe. He understands the slavery practiced in English in it is a great abuse of the god. White people engaged in abusing the god makes him sad, he becomes the victim of mock Christianity of white people against his expectation while returning from West Indies to England the boss in vessel threatens him when Equiano introduces himself as a Christian:

This incensed him exceedingly; and, with a volley of oaths and imprecations, he replied, ‘Christians! Damn you, you are one of St. Paul’s men; but by G---, expect you have St. Paul’s or St. Peter’s faith, and walk upon the water to the shore, you shall not go out of the vessel.’ (195-196)

Equiano witnesses such abuses to the god by the white people largely when he was making a journey to Cadiz the captain in a worse manner abuses the god, “ this made the captain exceeding fret full and peevish: and I was very sorry to hear god’s most holy name often blasphemed by him”(166-167).

In sharp contrast to these mock Christianity of white people, Equiano makes a good use of god, understands His greatness and obeys him. He assimilates the words of god and obeys them. While he is in West Indies with Irving in a colonial act he recognizes the god’s will and quits the job, “ The word of god faith,’ what does it avail a man if he gain the whole world and loose his own soul?’ This was much and heavily impressed on my mind (192)”.

His faith in god makes him come out of the sands quick of slavery and act as the abolitionist. He also learns about economic cause for the flourishing slavery that is a great sin for him.

Equiano in Europe learns that slavery is the product of money and he can free himself by earning money. Examining this very fact Terry S. Bozeman argues “he is able to equal his slavery with his economic status and visibility. Furthermore, he knows that to improve his economic condition he must alter his economic (that is, legal) status” (65). He labors more for it and at last becomes able to earn his price. He buys himself twice and becomes free in his second attempt. He also witnesses the commoditization of the slaves touching their sensibility. In this sense there lies a huge use of politics of sensibility in blacks especially to make money out of them by their overlaboring. Equiano is very well introduced with the European capitalism that makes him a “capitalist opportunist”. He recognizes the natural potentialities in Africa that can enrich the life of people, “the hidden treasures of centuries will be brought to light and into circulation, Industry, enterprise, and mining, and will have their full scope, proportional as they civilize” (251). Moreover, he also proposes the African as a good market for the British colonialist, “if the blacks were permitted to remain in their own country they would double themselves over fifty years, in proportion to such increases will be the demand for manufactures (253)”. He makes an economic comparison between the slave trade and the industrial colonization in Africa and claims the latter to be the more profitable, “it is more substantially their interest and advantage, and as such the nation’s at large, (except those concerned with manufacturing neck-yokes, collars, chains, handcuffs....(252). British can exploit the African resources and sell them to the Africans in a large profit. The innocent black mind now is very conscious of the economic artifacts and acts as capitalists.

British consciousness in him is the sum total of his economic religious and colonial consciousness that he collects in Europe in company of the white people. However, his own

African or native worldview too prevails in him throughout his life. In other words, native culture and perspective is in his blood, which is inevitable. These two different sides make him a hybrid man who neither can be a pure African, nor an English but remains in between African and Briton. Olaudah's dwelling between African culture and Briton culture creates him a third space from where he can very clearly grasp the both African as well as the British consciousness. Derrdre Coleman studying this situation of Olaudah with relation to Homi K. Bhabha's idea of cultural hybridism argues:

The complexity of Equiano's dual identity, shifting between English and African, is a persistent and at times richly contradictory theme in his life story, one which neatly illustrates Homi K. Bhabha's important concept of cultural hybridism or the condition of in-betweenness. Hybrid identity opens up a third space' for oppositional critique, challenging the monolithic opposites which structure so much of our thinking. Such as black and white, good and bad, male and female. (250)

Hybridity can also be found in Equiano where he neither seems African nor English. Terry S. Bozeman argues, "Olaudah is not only able to stand both on the inside and outside of the window of British society, Equiano can move efficiently between two" (62). For example, Equiano, after he arrives to England he gets a company of a little girl Guernsey growing 'very rosy' after her mother washes her face, he begins to feel acutely self-conscious about his baskiness, "I therefore tried oftentimes myself if I could not by washing make my face of the same colour as my little play mate (Mary), but it was all in vain, and I now began to be mortified at the difference in our complexion" (109).

Equiano's third space makes him able to see the evil of slavery on the side of white English culture and aspired to be determined to purchase and work against it. That is why he returns to his own place Africa, writes to the Queen of Britain and bitterly criticizes slavery

in his narrative as an author. Hybridity so makes him able to judge, evaluate and analyze both English and African worlds using his double consciousness. Because he lives in between these two worlds, whenever he needs he can tilt to any of them to examine, see and evaluate the other. Hybridity gives him a new venue to look at both of them critically.

Equiano's hybrid identity as Afro Briton can be argued because of his acculturation to British culture and his choice of it. At the age of ten he was captured and sold among other native Africans until, like many before, he was ultimately sold to European slavers. First going to Barbados and then on to Virginia, Equiano was purchased by Captain Pascal, who in turn sold him to a Quaker, Roert King, in 1763. Though he would eventually purchase his freedom, Equiano would never cease his crusade against slavery. Although born an African, Equiano is British by acculturation and choice. These binary oppositions place Equiano into his tenuous identity as the Afro- Briton. As such, Equiano not only must come to terms with whom or that he is, he must also learn to navigate this neither both identity. Cultural purity is not attainable. One is necessarily mingled to another culture right after he comes to the contact of the neighbouring countries as Equiano becomes a hybrid subject with his abduction. His purity vanishes as Bhabha in "Cultural diversity and Cultural Differences" writes:

The intervention of the Third space, which makes the structure of meaning and reference an ambivalent process, destroys this mirror of representation in which cultural knowledge is continuously revealed as an integrated, open, expanding code. It is only when we understand that all cultural settlements and systems are constructed in this contradictory and ambivalent space of enunciation, that we begin to understand why hierarchical claims to the inherent originality or 'purity' of cultures are untenable, even before we resort to empirical historical instances that demonstrate their hybridity. (156-57)

His reality of what lies before him when he first encounters the awaiting slave ships indicates the stark contrast of the two worlds he will later inhabit. The sights that confront him are so alien that Equiano finds himself speechless; the differences between the inhabitants of the world he is stolen from the one he is being carried off to are so viscerally apparent that Equiano thinks that he has entered into a “world of bad habits” (550, one for which he has not yet developed a vocabulary to describe. He writes:

During our passage I first saw flying fishes, which surprised me very much; and they used frequently to fly across the ship and many of them fell on the deck. I also now first saw the use of the quadrant. I had often with astonishment seen mariners make observations with it, and I could not think what it meant. They at last took notice of my surprise; and one of them, willing to increase it, as well as to gratify my curiosity, made me one day look through it. (59)

Equiano’s double consciousness through his hybrid situation can also be witnessed in his name. His name points to his need to understand and navigate the hybrid zone that he inhabits. Like many slaves, Equiano was given several names by his owners. Michael and Jacob were two names given to him earlier in his life; however, it is the name disparity of Olaudah Equiano Gustavus Vassa that points to his ultimate multi-conscious awareness. Equiano attempts to subvert by negation the fact that someone can name him by choosing the name he preferred and by discarding the one given to him by others. As his process of awareness develops through his gradual English language acquisition, Equiano seems to sense the agency inherent in identifying one’s name. He writes:

While I was on board this ship, my captain and master named me Guavas’ Vasa. I at time began to understand him a little, and refused to be called so, and told him as well as I could that I would be called Jacob’ but he said I

should not, and still called me Gustavus; and when I refused to answer to my new name, which at first I did, it gained me many a cuff; so at length I submitted. (64)

It is at the intersection that Equiano refuses to be ignored. Whether it be the African- Briton, the Christian- heathen or the salve freeman duality, Equiano ultimately positions him within and round all these dichotomized positions. His use of both names hints towards his willingness to exploit his situation of in between ness. It gives him a double consciousness of two cultures through two names which he chooses relatively when they are more useful and advantageous to him.

Equiano's narrative disrupts the western mode of thinking through its apparent split in the narrative voice along with the self authenticating tactics of the subtitle. The text can be celebrated for its disruption of Western modes of thinking, of binary distinction between epistemological categories such as black and white, or civilization and slavery. Yet nascent aspirations to represent Equiano as a visionary or as a redemptive figure of modernity are prohibited by his apparent acquiescence to Enlightenment reason and the principle of free trade of his submission to the judicial processes of the early capitalist state and his evangelical impulses. Such disruption of the dichotomy between western and so called civilized world with the black and African world is possible due to his consciousness of both cultures.

Consciousness of black subjectivity in Equiano strongly arises as much he delves into the world of white people. In the face of the pro slavery movement, abolitionist rhetoric aims to erect a coherent and reliable slave subject as the necessary object of political desire. Narrative contingencies that might be evoked by the irregular effects of memory or the aporias of desire are briefly contained but never explored. Instead, reflections on identity are meticulously checked in favor of the stock scenes and tropes of the speaking subject. As it advances an important argument against slavery the life of Olaudah Equiano produces a

conscious and apparently volitional discourse of black subjectivity. It contains within that discourse an image of enlightened blackness. But the attempt to speak from a stable political position despite the lack of institutional support produces enigmatic textual postures. The narrative is the site where it generates a conscious discourse of enlightened blackness. At the same time the narrative elements yield an unconscious discourse that necessarily weakens the evolution of the text's conscious goal. By mediating the image of the enlightened black subject with the structural arrangement of textual elements, Equiano's autobiography disarticulates the enlightenment synthesis between social and psychic process and questions the idea of the reasoning subject.

The two divisions of the narrative provide two different avenues to the characters to understand two different kinds of worlds. Volume one, chapters one to seven, recounts the author's personal experience of slavery culminating in his purchase of freedom. Volume two, chapter eight to twelve, deals with successive intense crisis of conscience on the part of the author, eventually resolved in his conversion to the Church of England. The emergence of the conversion narrative in the second volume of the text provides one locus of the intense debate among critics regarding the author's sincerity. For many readers the task of reconciling the persona of Equiano the entrepreneur with Equiano the Christian convert seems impossible. Yet this dissonance is key to understanding the text's puzzling production of the enlightened black subject. Specifically, a sequence of doubling events in the shape of storms and dreams forms an interlocking narrative structure between the two volumes that provides a key to the text's unconscious discourse. The two separate volumes present two different versions of religious perspectives of the narrator.

After emancipation in the southern states, the slaveholder's whip was replaced by a burden of conscience imposed on the freed population. The text inherits a language of a slave that works to replace external modes of coercive subjection with internal modes of

ideological submission. A new ideology of blackness advances through the text in order to cultivate a population of acquisitive, servile and self-reliant individuals. After Equiano purchases his freedom, he communicates a sense of indebtedness and appreciation. Indeed, he shows how an attitude of subservience sometimes threatens to overwhelm him; it is most apparent in a passage that implicitly conflates his “master” Robert King, with “God”:

These words of my master were like a voice from heaven to me; in an instant all my trepidation was turned into unutterable bliss; and I most reverently bowed myself with gratitude, unable to express my feelings, but by the overflowing of my eyes, and a heart replete with thanks to God; while my true and worthy friend the captain congratulated us both with a peculiar degree of heartfelt pleasure. (137)

Also, while Equiano describes his response as thankfulness, in the presence of his former master, gratitude alone is not adequate. In the passage, Equiano seems deliberately to place himself at a precarious distance from the Enlightenment model of reasoning man perhaps typified by Robert King. He describes himself as unable to portray his emotions with words, crying, and unsure of his behavior. In the next sentence, he says that he compared himself “in the best manner he was able” (137). As the scene closes, the freed Equiano continues to comport himself in an attitude of submission. His first movement upon being freed is presented as an act of obedience and compliance, “I rose with heart full of affection and reverence and left the room in order to obey my master’s joyful mandate of going to the Register Office” (136). Although Equiano’s urgent execution of his master’s word is ironic, even after he acquires the certificate of manumission, his compliant demeanor does not change. Despite his wish to return to London, he still agrees to work on another voyage from Nonserrat to Georgia on behalf of King; the reason he provides is that “gratitude bowed [him] down” (138). When that voyage is over, he once more concedes to yet another similar

venture- "I found myself unable to refuse requests" (147). The language of obligation seems worryingly to fail Equiano and to retard his movement towards equal status with King.

Yet, as the conversion narrative progresses, the elevation of King to a transcendental position with respect to the free Equiano has more complex effects. Even though Equiano seems to shower King with unworldly devotion this same language prepares the ground for the eventual process whereby Equiano replaces King with "god" as Master. In slave law, the slave is constituted as object rather than as subject of language but manumission undoes this syntactical position. It opens the possibility for the reconstitution of the slave as subject through the acquisition of the rights of personhood; for this reason, Equiano adopts the legal parameters of selfhood towards an imaginary performance of self mastery. Through his part in Equiano's manumission, King fulfills the function of the Subject presumed to know, initiating Equiano's entry as subject into the law, but the moment of manumission is on the same moment at which Equiano acquires language. After all, Equiano narrated a prior self in his account of his childhood in West Africa. Also, the obvious recognition of his humanity of slaveholders such as King and Pascal had already equipped Equiano with a language of self within a Western model, albeit an abjected one. Perhaps, this is why the moment of manumission seems to require Equiano's sense of obligation towards King in his performance of the Subject presumed to know. Still, Equiano manipulates the conventions of the conversion narrative in order to redirect this burden of obligation towards "god". In the first section of his autobiography, he acquires the capacity to perform the function of the legal subject by purchasing his freedom for seventy pounds. By means of the conversion narrative, Equiano sanctifies his performance of legal subjectivity according to an Enlightenment model of "full speech".

The religious consciousness in him begins with his conversion narrative. He converses himself into Christianity that is his search for a self, even if it is resulted due to his

crisis in conscience. Certainly, Equiano deploys the conversion narrative to counter racist discourse that aims to endorse white supremacy on the basis of biology. By describing his adoption of Christianity, Equiano aims to extend the principles of enlightenment to include black subjects. Equiano contends that differences in skin color signify differences in climatic environment rather than intellectual inferiority or superiority. For example in the case of a Portuguese settlement at Mitomba river in Sierra Leone, he shows that “the complexions of the same persons vary in different climates” and remarks, “Surely the minds of the Spaniards did not change with their complexions! (45). Ultimately, he adopts a culturalist position to explain observed differences in behavior between slaves and their holders. Equiano ascribes “apparent inferiority” (45) of slaves discerned by Europeans to their cultural dislocations: “When the slaves come among Europeans, they are ignorant of their language, religion, manners, and customs”(45). More importantly he describes numerous heinous acts of torture committed by slavers against their slaves as evidence of the dehumanizing goals of the institution. In addition, he compares the material conditions of some Africans to those of the ancestors of supposedly “enlightened” Europeans, “Did nature make the ancestors inferior to their sons? And should they too have been made slaves?” he sardonically poses, and replies that “Every rational mind answers, No” (45). By demonstrating that “understanding is not confined to feature or color” (45) Equiano strives to prove that understanding rather than color is the path to dignity, where understanding is constituted as a Western model of knowing.

Yet, as a principle of the conscious discourse of the Enlightenment, understanding finally connotes something that exceeds cultural literacy; when the word emerges in the conversion narrative, it is imbued with overtones of faith. The language that becomes central to Equiano’s discourse of understanding is of course biblical language. Significantly, his conversion to Christianity finally comes about as the result of an acquired understanding of

the Bible rather than an acquired belief in God. Equiano describes the vision curiously by means of another Biblical verse, “the Lord was pleased to break in upon my soul with his bright beam of heavenly light’ and in an instant, as it were, removing the veil, and letting light into a dark place” (190). Since the vision is not a personal one, Equiano’s repetitions of the autobiography, his acquired understanding of the Bible appears to make him present to his freedom. Simultaneously, his conversion replaces the burden of obligation to his former master with a burden of obligation to God as a debt transfer takes place as Equiano “sees” what “a great debtor’ he is to “sovereign free grace”(190).

While Equiano’s conversion to Christianity obliterates his sense of obligation to King, this Christian understanding nonetheless acts retroactively in the text. Equiano’s enlightenment by Biblical word follows a crisis of conscience that, in theory should have been predicated on an understanding of the Bible. This failure in the chronological sequence of the conversion narrative makes the veiling of unconscious textual drives by conscious discourse conspicuous. In fact the crisis of conscience appears too early in the narrative precisely because it is needed to fulfill the transfer of duty from Robert King to God first suggested in the manumission scene. Emerging gradually between the end of the seventh chapter and the beginning of the eighth, the crisis is concurrent with Equiano’s two voyages from Georgia to Montserrat and back requested by King after the manumission scene. These voyages are distinguished by the great storms that attend them. In the first voyage, which Equiano calls his “free voyage” (142), the captain of the ship dies. But despite the “strong northerly gales and rough seas” (142) that cause the drowning of the ship’s cargo of cattle, Equiano succeeds in piloting the ship to shore at Antigua and then to Montserrat. He reports that “[m]any were surprised when they heard of my conducting the sloop into the port, and now obtained a new appellation, and was called captain” (144). The epithet “captain” symbolises not only his courage in saving the ship but also his newly acquired free status as

captain of his own self, after this incident, Equiano remarks that he thought his “gratitude to Mr. King” (147). That is, the account of the first “free voyage” closes with the exoneration of Equiano and an expectation of his release from any further obligation towards King.

The second “free voyage”, which initially opened the second volume, is almost a repetition of the first, like a replay of the end of last week’s episode in a serial television drama, the route taken by the ship is the same. Although, at first, the voyage is calm, when the new captain’s carelessness causes the ship to be steered towards dangerous rocks, scenes of a stormy ocean are regenerated. Equiano’s dialogue issues a warning of the disaster to come, “the breakers”, I said, “are around us, and the vessel is almost on the rock” (149). Immediately, the “roaring of the billows” (149) and “a single heave of the swells” (149) causes the wreck of the ship. During this second disaster, Equiano again comports himself like a captain. He constructs a makeshift patch of the ship’s damaged side, allowing it to stay afloat until the next morning. That day, while the white sailors on board get drunk, Equiano and four other men of color make five journeys from the ship to a nearby island in the lifeboat thereby rescuing everyone on board. The account of the second “free voyage” begins with renewed sense of Equiano’s obligation to King but ends by acquitting him of such obligation for the second time. Indeed, after the second voyage, Equiano finally leaves King’s service and embarks for England. The conversion narrative takes preeminence at this point.

Most likely the narrative of the two free voyages aimed to convince an eighteenth-century, white audience that Equiano had comported himself dutifully with respect to King; he shows how he strived to acquit himself of any legal or moral obligation. The account of two dreams, occurring between the two voyages, helps to reinforce this narrative function. Equiano reports, “I dreamt the ship was wrecked amidst the surfs and that I was the means of saving everyone of board; and on the night following I dreamed the very same dream” (148).

Through the incorporation of the Biblical versed into the text, Equiano appears to suggest that his two dreams were messages from a God who speaks twice in dreams but is ignored.

When Equiano pays no attention to the bi part prophecy of he doubled dream, he is struck by his first intense criss of conscience. His imaginary sense of “self” typified by the epithet “captain” is profoundly disturbed. An oath he utters on deck one evening, “Damn the vessel’s bottom out” (148), appears to be he idrect cause of he crisis. But whenhe leaves his duty on deck that same evening and goes to sleep, that dream recurs for a third time. Ths time the dream seems to approximate the status of “full speech”. On the historical register, the events it prophesizes come about the ship is wrecked and Equiano is primarily responsible for rescuing all the people on broad. His crisis on conscience causes his conversion to Christianity.

Loss of conscience is another cause for his conversion to Christianity and a way to the religious consciousness. The aesthetic symmetry of the text’s conscious discourse is disrupted by a digression during the second voyage. It begins after the ship has hit the rocks and Equiano suffers a vision of horror, “in a moment a scene of horror presented itself to my mind such as I never had conceived or experineced before. All my sins stared me in the face; and especially I thought that God had hured his direful vengeance on my guilty head for cursing he vessel on which my life depended” (149). Equiano rationalizes his experience of horror as an effect of conscience triggered by his earlier misguided oath. But, since this crisis of concience is pmature, the “scene of horror” seems more closely connectd to he realities of slavery in which he is imbricated. The experience of horror emotively foregrounds the horrific events that follow the shipwreck on he rocks- when the undependable captain recognizes the damage casued to the ship, he gives an order to “nail down the hatches” (149), I this way trapping he cargo of enslaved people on board and freeing up he lifeboat fro the

crew. Equiano's response to the captain's order is significant because of its conflation of slavery and what he presents as his sin:

When he ordered the men to nail down the hatches I thought that my sin was the cause of this, and that God would charge me with these people's blood.

This thought rushed upon my mind that instant with such violence, that it quite overpowered me, and I fainted. I recovered just as the people were about to nail down the hatches; perceiving which, I desired them to stop. (149)

If due to lack of understanding, he narrated Equiano at this point in the autobiography could not have been overwhelmed by a sense of "sin" it seems more likely that conflicting identifications of self as subject and self as slave object, produced by the captain's order effectively to drown the slaves, causes Equiano's traumatic response his loss of consciousness. The self narrated Equiano is not "full speaking" (149) but intersubjective, attached to the slaves below deck as well as to the merchant sailors above.

In fact, the fainting recalls an earlier loss of consciousness when Equiano is first brought on board a European slave ship. During his account of his arrival at the ship, Equiano first uses the word "black" in relation to other people:

When I looked around the ship too, and saw a large furnace of copper boiling, and a multitude of black people of every description chained together, every one of their countenances expressing dejection and sorrow, I no longer doubted of my fate, and, quite overpowered with horror and anguish, I fell motionless on the deck and fainted. (55)

The connection between Equiano's experiences of horror and slavery are more explicit in this early passage. The language demonstrates his recognition of the Enlightenment configuration of blackness as absence. At the time of his enslavement, Equiano's slaveholders attempt to evacuate his body of his self. As a black self, he is figuratively pushed out of the symbolic

order; he is de-subjectivated, configured as non subject, as object, or as absence. The suspension of the narrator's emtonymic movement within the symbolic order produces a hiatus in the conscious discourse of the text. Equiano falls unconscious. As a character in his own text, he returns to a state of psychic chaos that precedes subjectivation. While the conscious discourse of the text works to resubjectivate Equiano, the loss of consciousness in the second "free" voyage represents a return of the repressed experience of enslavement as objectification.

The moment marked by the loss of consciousness acts like a flashback. It produces a syncopated pattern of doubling that breaks the interlocking Paris of storms and dreams, fracturing the imagery dualism of the storm sequence. By evoking the reader's memory of his past life as a slave, Equiano's second loss of consciousness re-introduces the temporality of the subject into the narrative. The metaphorical mirroring of the two dreams and two storms are rendered as "misrecognition" and the tertiary quality, or difference, of the full speaking dream begins to unfold. If Equiano does, in fact, save the lives of everyone on board including the slaves, as the dream predicts, he does not save the slaves from slavery.

Double consciousness in this narrative so comes out of Equiano's hybrid situation of being neither an African nor an Englishman. He also lives the life of slave as well as that of a freeman. This in-between situations creates a new place for him from where he can experience, evaluate and judge these both worlds. Now, he can look at himself from both eyes; that of an African he has already a pious and pristine consciousness of the world and themselves, as a slave he condemns the evil of slavery developing his consciousness of it where whites are no more than a cannibal. On the other hand, as a Briton he earns the colonial, religious and capitalistic consciousness altogether forming his English consciousness. So as DuBois says there are "two souls, two thoughts, two un-reconciled

strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body (8-9)". These two in one generates double consciousness in him that acts as an adverse ethnos cape throughout the narrative.

### III. Conclusion

Olaudah's interesting narrative explores the situation of double consciousness in a Black African who has been captured to be enslaved by white slave hunters and brought to Europe where he happens to undergo a European culture in addition to his original African culture and its consciousness. He faces the challenges or threats in his indigenous identity while living an English life with and among English people. However he also exploits an opportunity of experiencing both cultures in order to make his independent judgment over them. He faces double consciousness in the level of economy, religion, nationality and education by being both an independent freedom fighter/ African and as a Briton.

Equiano's state of double consciousness occurs right with his enslavement from his house along with his sister. He happens to live the life of an African free man as well as a Briton in the form of a slave. As a free African his attitude towards everything including the European is pristine, naïve and innocent. He doesn't know to cheat abuse and scold anyone. His free state recurs even after his slavery when he enables himself to buy his freedom from slavery by his own effort. He now gains another consciousness as an abolitionist and an author. However in the latent level he is working as an agent of religious and capitalistic form of colonization. As a religious agent he preaches Christianity in his virgin land where he spent his childhood enjoying his own innocence. While as an author he gives the suggestion of industrial or economic colonization to the British colonizers instead of slave trade from Africa. Therefore his consciousness is still tinged with the color of colonization even if he sounds abolitionist.

As a Briton Equiano remains a slave being captured and transported to Europe in the process of slave trade which was flourishing during the time. He, as a slave, undertakes many roles including that of a slave, the seaman, the ship's captain, the slave overseer, a warrior, as a

preacher etc. these all roles help him to create different understanding of native African culture and of the English culture.

As a sea man he becomes an agent of colonizer and goes in an expedition or in war between France and Britain. He also goes to West Indies as a colonizer with Dr. Irving as a slave overseer. As an abolitionist, he goes to Jamaica with religious preaching and Bible. Similarly as an author he advocates for economic colonization of Africa. This is a unique consciousness of Olaudah as a Briton. It provides him with an identity of trickster who takes opportunity of the situation in order to enrich himself. He is also seen in the role of a businessman who makes a business to earn his freedom.

We can also witness an ironic consciousness in Equiano's life. As an author he thinks and portrays the white as savage in regard to slavery and narrates his story by contrasting the rotten and rude culture of white people to that of pristine African culture. At the same time he also thinks that white people are necessary to civilize and reform the African people and therefore writes a suggestive letter to Queen to take a support of reformed guise of colonization through the mode of capitalism and industrialization in Africa. This is how he happens to rear an ironic consciousness in him.

Equiano's acquaintance with England introduces him with the European capitalism. He comes to understand that capitalism is the main or sole cause of the evil of slavery. He exploits this knowledge to free himself from the slavery. Later on, he falls under the fascinating culture of Europe and follows their lifestyle. He is fully fascinated by the European wisdom and books as well as Christianity. His understanding of European or white slowly and gradually gets a changed guise beside the case of slavery. It helps to make him a hybrid man who neither falls under an African culture, nor remains a complete white English man rather becomes an amalgamation of both of these cultures thereby resulting into a hybrid man. His hybridity, as Bhabha believes in the fertile third space created out of such hybridity,

assists him to remain in between these cultures from where he exploits both the chances to criticize and appraise any culture he is fascinated to. He now can tilt to any side and make his own judgment which is possible through his situation of double consciousness of British as well as Black community.